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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on an in-depth ethnographic study of one Latina attending a predominantly White university. The study focuses on her experiences during the process of earning a graduate degree, the importance of family and cultural influences, and the differences between the path taken by Chicanas/Latinas in higher education and that of nonminority students. The subject of the study, Carmen, was born in Peru and raised in Los Angeles (California); she identifies herself as Latina but affiliates with the Chicana paradigm. Research methodology included formal and informal interviews, observations, document review, and a limited questionnaire. A literature review provides a demographic profile of Chicanos and Latinos in higher education and discusses diversity within Latino culture, Latino socioeconomic status, underrepresentation of Latinas in higher education, conflictive factors for minority college students, acculturation and self-identity of people of color, and the effects of education on acculturation. A narrative presents Carmen's educational experiences from elementary school through college and portrays a typical day in her life, including her duties as a school counselor; experiences in her graduate class and practicum; interactions with family, roommate, and boyfriend; and her desires to return home, provide services to inner-city children, and begin her own family. Analysis points out the importance of Carmen's cultural background and identity, struggles of being in higher education (culture shock, lack of peer support and role models, and persistent stereotypes), and the multiple roles she plays. Contains 57 references and a glossary. (SV)

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The Relationship Between The Chicana/Latina Value System And Higher Education: An Ethnographic Study

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The Relationship Between the Chicana/Latina Value System and Higher Education: An Ethnographic Study

Introduction

The U.S. Census Bureau (1990) reports that the United States is undergoing a radical change in terms of demographics. It is estimated that by the year 2000 more than one-third of the population will consist of ethnic or racial minorities (Griffith, Frase, and Ralph, 1989). The immigration rate has moved the U.S. into a diverse population and today, some of the children of these immigrants are attending college. However, there is an under representation of Latinos in Higher Education and there is a minimal call to recruit and retain such population (Aguirre & Martinez 1993; Quintana, 1991).

The total number of Latino students enrolled in post secondary institutions was approximately 680,000 in 1988. The figure represents 5.2% of all college student in the United States. This is not a proportionate representation of Latinos in higher education when compared to their total population (Quintana, 1991). Moreover, graduate level degrees constitute only 2.7% of Masters, 2.7% of doctoral, and 2.9% of professional degrees (NCES,1990).

Women tend to also be victims of the unjust academic selection process (Peterson, 1974). There is an assumption that women are the less-well qualified gender. They have ascribed roles in society and are to follow them. For example, even today many people still subscribe to the view that "in order to be fulfilled a woman must follow her habitual instinct and become a wife and mother" (Gray, 1982). Societal norms uphold that women are to be emotional, dependent and nurturing individuals. Women are to take supportive roles and are not be aggressive nor vocal within the masses. Men, on the other hand, are conditioned to believe that they are dominant, aggressive and superior to women. As a consequence, women experience discrimination, limitations and barriers in the educational system. In 1981, women made up more than half of the undergraduate and graduate student population. However, data from the Center for Education Statistics show that as women progress up the academic ladder, they make up less than one fourth of the figures (Wilson, 1992).

Chicana/Latina women, a heterogeneous group, are also socialized to accept certain so-called "women's" roles. Traditionally, they are to accept the role of the mother, the wife and the homemaker (Gray, 1982). The woman is to function as the caring strand of the family, the nurturer providing support. Today, she is transforming that paradigm to a less traditional and more independent one. Chicana/Latinas are attempting to enter the higher education system to better themselves and their families. Unfortunately, they are experiencing enormous barriers throughout their experiences and the possibility of equal representation of Chicana/Latina women in higher education remains bleak.

Problem Addressed by the Study

This study, an in-depth ethnographic study of one Latina attending a predominately white institutition, examines the needs and roles of minority students in higher education. More specifically, it focuses on Chicana/Latinas and their experieices throughou the process of earning graduate degrees. It evaluates the plight of Chicana/Latinas in higher education in conjunction with homogenous family oriented and traditional paradigm of familial origins. The problems addressed are specified in terms of three questions:

1. What attracts Chicana/Latinas to higher education?
2. What is more important to Latinas: career mobility or family achievement? (Why?)
3. What are the conflicting values between the Latina and Higher Education?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this investigation is to identify patterns that influence the educational aspirations and attainment of Latinas. The research attempts to reveal and understand the perspectives and experiences of Latinas and higher education in relation to culture and family inferences. Furthermore, it provides a detailed explanation of the path taken by Chicana/Latinas in higher education and how substantially different it can be from non-minority students.

Research Methodology, Design and Procedures

The limited investigation was a qualitative study of emergent design. An instrumental case study was conducted "to better understand and to provide insight" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) regarding the issue or recruitment and retention in postsecondary degrees with regards to the Chicana/Latino population. The Chicana/Latina who was the focal Latina in this study was puposively selected from a Chicana/Latina roster provided by a four year institution in the far Northwest. The participant is Peruvian who identifies as Latina but affiliates with the Chicano paradigm. By studying her experiences, it will be possible to better understand a Chicana/Latina's experience in Higher Education, the barriers they encounter and practices they implement to survive through the difficult social conditions in a predominately white post secondary institution.

During the investigation, the following findings emerged: (a) family significance; (b) the struggles of higher education; (c) limited role models; and (d) the presence of stereotypes. The paper proceeds as follows: First, a literature review is provided to understand the trends and history of Chicanos in higher education. Second, a theoretical framework stands behind the aspect of the study. Third, a narrative is provided about the Chicana/Latina's background, beliefs and experience in higher education. Fourth, an analysis follows combining the framework with the participant's experience. And fifth, a summary and conclusion are provided.

Research methodology included twenty formal and informal interviews, subjective observations, document collection, a limited questionnaire, and photographic data. The formal interviews conducted were approximately one to two hours. Some topics discussed throughout these interviews were: family background, school interest, college experience, career aspirations, and family dreams. All the interviews were used to gather background from the observations, philosophy of education and the participant's value system. The informal interviews explored the Chicana/Latina's needs and perceptions towards the so-called ivory tower of Higher Education. Additional data were gathered through interviews with purposively selected individuals in the life of the focal student: the Chicana/Latina's mother, boyfriend, sister and friends.

Participant observations consisted of various site visitations to the participant's home, work and classroom settings. Data were recorded on topics of conversation, participant's behavior, daily routine and other substantial data useful for the analysis of the study. Document collection assisted the researcher in the analysis and throughout the interviews. Examples of such data are: pamphlets, the participant's university figures and facts and newspaper articles. Photos of the home and family provided valuable information regarding the participant's practices and values.

Ethical research practices were used throughout the study. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study and the ethical codes of guidelines. All identities were kept confidential to provide minimal risk exposure. Furthermore, the participants were protected from the issues of harm and deception (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Participants signed a consent form indicating the details of the study and its purpose.

Literature Review

Demographic Profile of Chicano/Latinos in Higher Education

There is a difference between the enrollment of ethnic and non-ethnic students in four year universities. Underrepresentation of the Chicano/Latino communities in postsecondary institutions exists, and there has been minimal increase in higher education enrollment or degrees gained. Furthermore, the representation of Chicano/Latino students in postsecondary education is highly concentrated in two-year colleges, and it is not moving toward the four-year tier institutions (NCES 1990; Olivas 1986).

The drop out rate for minorities at a post-secondary level is noteworthy. Chicano/Latino students enter the system but show low graduation rates. These students are geared toward community colleges and rarely survive the system to attain a bachelor's degree. The leaks are between: high school, community colleges and four year universities. Moreover, when they arrive to higher education, these children encounter the difficulty of many college undergraduates, but they also experience a sense of: isolation, culture shock, acculturative stress, and discrimination (Haro 1983; Lopez-Madrid-Bareka, & Velasquez 1982).

The participation rate in higher education for students in general is determined by numerous factors. Some of these factors are related to personal characteristics, past experiences, culture, SES, gender, motivation, personal abilities, opportunities available and benefits expected. Some students enter the system for career mobility, others have parents who modeled attaining a higher education. For Chicano/Latinos, these factors are somewhat different, because the representation of Chicano/Latinos was almost non-existent until the 1960s. As a result, Chicano/Latino student's motives for attending college are more geared towards SES mobility and career benefits since they are frequently unable to receive the benefits of modeling from family members (Aguirre & Martinez, 1993; Quintana 1990).

"Completing the requirements for a bachelor's degree brings an end to the college experience for most graduating students" (Aguirre & Martinez 1993). It is the ticket to attain a stable career, for mobility in society and the key to a better income. Moreover, at a higher level of understanding human existence, obtaining credentials is needed. Unfortunately, graduate school enrollments are not reflecting expansion of ethnic students and a consistent underrepresentation prevails in the attainment of graduate degrees (Brown 1987; Lopez, Madrid-Barela, and Macias 1976).

Diversity within the Latino Culture

Culture

The enormous diversity within the Chicano/Latino population reflects differences among the attainment and experience in the educational system. The educational attainment varies among groups as: Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, South Americans, and Central Americans. The following are the statistics among the groups in regards to attaining a four year degree or more in higher education: Cubans, 17%; Puerto Ricans 8%; South and Central Americans, 12%; Mexicans 5.8% (Fields, 1988).

SES

"Education is perhaps the most important issue in examining the current SES of the U.S. Latino population" (Perez and Salazar, 1993). Chicano/Latinos represent a growing proportion of both the current and future labor force. Comparing their figures to education, we find Chicano/Latinos increasing in elementary grades, but decreasing in upper grades (Perez & Salazar, 1993). Latinos have a higher drop-out rate than any major population and the lowest level of educational attainment. Orum (1986) reported that Latino rates ranged from 7% to 85% depending on the region of the country. This is the consequence of the SES variable which indirectly influences dropout behavior through its effect on achievement, grades, scores and retention (Rumberger, 1991).

Women in Higher Education

The issue of women being neglected in higher education has been a long existing conflict. Women have been highly underrepresented in academia and their voices continue to go unheard. Women have attained a short shrift in the selection process in education. They have minimal access to the educational hierarchy and are penalized by their sex (Furniss & Graham,1974). The number of women has increased in higher education, but as you go up the ladder, representation is less. As a result, women's position in higher education remains bleak.

The number of Latina women receiving Ph.D. degrees in the U.S. increased from 20.1 percent in 1975 to 45.7 percent in 1986, a total of 567 Latina women received PhDs in 1986 (Johnson 1989). However, the social climate for Latina women in higher education is fraught with many barriers. Ortiz (1989) reported Chicana/Latina women experience feelings of isolation and alienation in the academy. They lack representation of other minority women in academia, and they feel over burdened. In addition, the women experienced a lack of support from their faculty and their general environment. As a consequence, Chicana/Latinas remain to hold low representation in higher education within their "disadvantaged positions."

Today, Chicana/Latinas are serving as combat warriors (Minority Affairs, 1989). They are becoming politically active and are challenging their experiences. They are shifting from traditional ascribed roles and entering higher education. "They are defining achievement in terms of goals outside the home in male-dominated arenas" (Martinez Thorne, 1996). Chicana/Latinas, the pillar of strength in families (Lopez, 1988-89), are re-assembling this traditional role. They are entering the higher education system and facing barriers constructed by the American society. They are creating a new agenda for Chicana/Latina women and providing a new conceptual framework.

Conflictive Factors in Higher Education

Alienation

The cultural quality of most post-secondary institutions was poor until some years ago. Ethnic students repeatedly report colleges do not meet their needs or aspirations. Ethnic students who do not feel involved in or feel any relation to the campus may develop cultural isolation. They may not seek to get involved and feel as an 'outsider' (Astin, 1984).

Alienation is a term used to describe the state of being composed of three experiences: powerlessness, normlessness and social isolation (Steward, R., Germain, S. & Jackson, J. D.; 1991). Powerlessness refers to interpersonal interpretation of a situation which one feels no control over desired outcomes (Steward, Germain & Jackson, 1992; Schram & Lauver, 1988). Chicano/Latino students do not feel as part of the system and predict very little of their future. They travel through a tunnel without light, an unfamiliar path which does not feel as one of their own.

Normlessness is the loss of social values that may arise from adopting contradictory values (Burbach & Thompson, 1971). The academy's value system is one structured from a Euro-centric perspective. It rewards individualism and competition, a paradigm different from a Chicana/Latinas' where communal efforts are enforced and competition discouraged.

Social isolation is the feeling of loneliness or separation from group norms or standards (Steard, Germain , Jackson, 1992; Dean, 1961). The students feel separate from the mainstream

culture and alone in the system. They do not encounter others as themselves and their culture or values are not ones addressed and for that matter- many times not celebrated.

Overall, alienation is found among all university students, however there is a difference among race and ethnicity. Students of color experience alienation to a greater degree than Anglo students (Burcah & Thomson, 1971; Loo & Rolison, 1986; Madrazo-Peterson & Rodriguez, 1978; Minatoya & Sedacek, 1981; Parker & Scott, 1985; Schram & Lauver, 1988).

Limited Role Models

Latinas, who were raised in homes with gender clearly denied and a system supporting collaboration, family, and community, find themselves unpreparepared for higher education (Martinez Thorne, 1996). Mentoring can play a significant role to assist these Chicana/Latinas with the new demands; it can be positive for achievement. The underrepresentation of Chicana/Latinas in faculty positions (1.5% Hispanics of all faculty and only 1.1% of all tenured, CFES, 1988) minimizes the accessibility of mentors for the incoming women of color. It limits Chicana/Latinas from receiving support, encouragement and guidance in regards to the unfamiliar system of higher education.

Low Expectations/ Stereotypes

The constant devaluation and speculation of Chicano/Latinos intellectual product is a recurrent barrier in the experience of Chicano/Latinos in higher education. The outdated attitudes of minority's career aspirations constitute a main barrier. As a result, their level of research, relevance of teaching a subject matter are investigated and highly speculative.

Acculturation and Self-Identity of People of Color

Acculturation refers to a process when a person acquires or fails to acquire the customs of an alternate culture while retaining or failing to retain the norms of his or her native culture (Martinez & Mendoza, 1984). How the person incorporates the dominant culture with their native

culture will determine their acculturation level. Martinez & Mendoza (1984) suggest that the degree to which a person becomes acculturated will depend on the family's immigration history. For example, if a family recently immigrated from Latin America, Mexico or the Caribbean, they might not be as familiar to American norms or customs and have more Latino traditional views. In a similar fashion, a family who has been in America may be more acculturated.

According to Berry (1980), Mexican Americans can experience "acculturative stress." Acculturative stress results from behaviors and experiences generated during acculturation that are mildly pathological and disruptive to an individual and his/her group. Acculturative stress of Mexican Americans is caused by three factors: (a) a great disparity in behaviors and attitudes between Mexican Americans and the host culture, (b) strong pressures for the Mexican American to acculturate (e.g., migration to an "assimilating society" or "melting pot" society), and (c) a Mexican American culture that promotes less independence (i.e. less psychologically differentiated or more field dependent) (Berry, 1980).

According to Ponterotto, J. G. et al. (1995), Mexican-Americans with low levels of acculturation tend to have lower socioeconomic status (SES), greater likelihood of primarily or solely speaking Spanish, fewer social support systems, less familiarity with the American culture and less familiarity with the U.S. public agencies. Therefore, it has been hypothesized that low acculturation results in lower utilization of accessible resources. More specifically, the level of acculturation appears to be an influencing factor on educational attainment for Chicano/Latino populations.

Effects of Education on Acculturation

Studies show that the greater the education, the higher the acculturation level one attains. Acculturation is correlated with more liberal attitudes towards women, single status and education. It has been reported that the less acculturated the women, the more traditional roles, behaviors and attitudes they attain (Carrillo-Beron, 1974; Olmedo & Padilla, 1978; Richmond, 1976; Satterfield, 1966; Tharp et al., 1968). The process of acculturation is implicated by moving away from

traditional roles. As a result, acculturation may create conflict for the Chicana/Latina: her roles in the home, her culture, and the environment of the academy.

Summary

It appears that both background characteristics and the institutional characteristics of higher education function as barriers faced by students of color in higher education. The literature supports that there are additional factors that determine the chances of succeeding in academia for students of color. Institutions, family, the environment and many other components are substantial influences for the location students of color in higher institutions. As a result, these factors affect the presence of Chicano/Latinos in higher education. There is a long overdue effort required from higher education to address diversity and ethnic identity as significant components for the equality of higher education. Unfortunately, little literature was found in regards to ethnic minorities and higher education. As Singh reported (1990), a limited number of studies focus such issues.

Analytic Framework

Symbolic interaction views humans in society as reflective and interacting units which comprise the societal entity. Social interaction recognizes people's ability to think and develop distinct human ways. It identifies individuals as distinct entities with dynamic process. Socialization is viewed as an ongoing social process. "It is a down-to-earth approach to the scientific study of human group life and human conduct (Denzin, 1992; Blumer 1969).

Social interaction is viewed as a behavior of actors playing out roles shaped through evolutionary adaptation. It acknowledges society cooperatively and individually items those who can alter the social structural conditions. Symbolic interaction places considerable emphasis on the openness of human action, the possibilities for creative rather than simple reactive responses, and the availability and reality of choice and self direction (Stryker, Shelson & Statham , 1985).

Interaction is a symbolically defined environment. "People act with reference to one another in terms of the symbols developed through their interaction, and they act through the

communication of these symbols" (Styker, 1980). Social life is considered a dynamic process where meaning is continually created and recreated by people and their reference to the environment; the assignment of meaning within an interaction assists people to find themselves.

Symbolic Interaction and the Self

Symbolic Interactionalists focus on self concept and the role of identity in people. George H. Mead emphasized on the concept of "the self". Mead differentiated between individuals as objects and individuals as subjects. He formulates self concept into three stages: play stage, game stage, and generalized other"(Johnson, 1981). In the play stage, the individual "plays at" someone else's role. In the second, participants in a game are able to take the role of several others simultaneously. Finally, the generalized other consists of general expectations and standards.

Cooley (1964) refers to the aspect of self-concept as the "looking glass self". He argues that the individual and society are "organically interrelated". He believed the development of the individual was influenced by social heritage and through human communication. Furthermore, he reasons social relationships provide a reflection of the self.

McCall and Simmons' model states, "Role identities consists of the self images individuals have as occupants of various social positions" (Johnson, 1981). The model supports that individuals have various role identities that correspond to various roles and positions in society. These role identities are expressed through role performances. As a result, the structure of the self requires various roles. The individual - the professor, the mother, the wife are all examples of various roles. Individuals examine the meanings associated to each role and emphasize on its relations to self identity.

Burke and Reitzes (1991) reported that "identities are social products that are formed, maintained and confirmed." Identities are self meanings and symbolic. They are reference points for individuals and attribute to roles. Furthermore, Burke (1991) reports identity is not a substitute word for the self, but "it denotes a situation of a person in terms of standing in the context of a particular social relationship or group."

In summary, these models help explain the relation of the self and roles. Each model distinguishes between behaviors of "the acting self" and the "real self" and the effects of social context. The models imply individuals are selective among roles, and that they act upon external stimuli and in relation to their perceived self identity.

Self Identity and Norms

The "self" is an existing entity with multiple characteristics. It is a "product of a man's ability to see himself as he thinks others view him, and his concern for his image" (Linton, 1936). Self identity is a gradual process formed in "bits and pieces". Rogow, Marica, and Slugosk (1982) report each division of the self builds upon previous ones, finally forming a consistent structure.

Through the forming of the self, an individual requires a set of norms which checks his her tendency "not to range too widely" (Goode, 1960). Norms are the normative components of the structure of society. They become "constructive parts of personalities and the self." (Parson, 1964). Individuals require a commitment to roles and norms. They learn what is expected of them, however a behavior is not simply a response to an exterior stimuli; rather the person is "minded and reflective" (Synderder and Spreitzer, 1984).

Culture and the Self

"Culture refers to the taken for granted and problematic webs of significance and meaning that human beings produce and act on when they do things together" (Becker, 1968; Geertz; 1973; Carey; 1989). The meaning within the acts are shaped by the larger culture: the media, newspapers, books, family, religion, and politics. As a result, culture is evaluated through its structure of meaning and interactional forms.

> Culture and identity are a parade of anachronistic symbols, larger than life abstractions, less a shared set of beliefs and values than the collective strategies by which we organize and make sense of our experience, a complex yet tightly integrated construction on a state of perpetual flux (Stavans, 1995).

Society plays a variety of roles in the identity process. It provides rules of appropriate conduct and creates reality for the individual. People's behavior is viewed from the standpoint of social relations. Stansfield Sargant states, a person's role is a pattern or type of social behavior which seems situationally appropriate to him in terms of the demands and expectations of those in his group (Banton, 1965).

Identity and Commitment

Commitment is "an investment of energy that produces a consistent line of human behavior and that makes it increasingly difficult to follow alternative paths" (Becker, 1960). Commitment explains why people engage in consistent lines of activity over time and across situations. When an individual aligns to a set of norms, it can be assumed the individual has the same direction as the group.

Commitment is composed of two elements: intrinsic satisfaction and extrinsic rewards (Synder and Spreitzer, 1984). Intrinsic satisfaction is internal gratification, and extrinsic rewards are elements such as money. Commitment can be based on anticipation of rewards. Examining the meanings associated with roles facilities commitment, a person's investment and attachment is related to sacrifices and costs.

Narrative

The Chicana/Latina Background

Carmen Garcia, the participant studied, is a Latina born in Peru whose background is Peruvian-Cuban; her mother is from the Caribbean and her father from South America. Carmen came to the United States at the age of one and was raised in the Southeast Area of Los Angeles, California. She was raised in the inner-city within a predominately Chicano/Latino community. Her parents came to the U.S. during the early 70s seeking the American dream. At first, they moved in with family relatives, but shortly they purchased a home of their own. Her parents are blue collar workers in the lower-middle SES income bracket.

Carmen is the eldest of two daughters. Her sibling is ten months younger. Of the two, Carmen is the only one attaining an academic degree. Her sister is pursuing vocational training, specializing in computers. She is the first amongst her family members to receive a Master's degree and one of three to attain any higher education.

Carmen's elementary years were described as a "social get together". She did not recall school as an important element of her early years. She vividly remembers passing notes in class, talking on the phone, doing minimal homework and being a C student. Sighing about the idea, Carmen states, "there was only one Latino faculty through my elementary years." She recalls the teacher not being favored by the administration and the Chicano/Latino families protesting for her stay. "It's funny," she states, "my school was at least 99% Latinos and we had not teachers who looked like us."

Elementary schooling was a difficult time for Carmen. She recalls her principal telling her mother that Carmen would not amount to anything and that she would recommend that Carmen go to summer school for further training. Carmen remembers struggling with the language of English in her early years, and goes on to say that she had a friend interpreter who would help her communicate until she "attained a better grasp of the language."

Carmen's experience in high school differs from that of primary schooling. Carmen recalls getting her first A and feeling smart. She said, I never thought I could do it, but all it took was my first A." She remembers the Latinas graduating in the senior class and thinking "I want to be there some day." She describes her high school as a Latino family and a comforting environment. Carmen does not recall receiving any guidance from her counselor for the college application process, but she did request letters of recommendation and inquired about financial aid.

Focusing on her bachelor's degree, Carmen recalls arriving to campus and feeling disoriented and alone. She was startled by the many buildings, the many people and the absence of guidance. She remembers picking up maps to learn her way, seeking out the resources and going home after a long days work, exhausted and feeling scared. Carmen remembers her feeling of astonishment and desire to return home. The first year, Carmen commuted but the following

years she lived near campus. Carmen thinks her undergraduate years took adjustment, but they provided a strong foundation for graduate school.

Carmen introduced graduate school to her family. She was encouraged by a professor and advisor in undergrad to consider a post secondary degree. Carmen wondered if this was for her and if she would get anything from it. Carmen expressed her concerns of the role of a graduate student: overachiever, go-getter and competitive and her worries of the incongruence between her values and this paradigm.

The community of Carmen's postsecondary higher education institution is composed of approximately 25,000, located in a rural area of a western state. The land grant university has approximately 17,000 students including both undergraduate and graduate programs. The population changes as professors and university students enter and exit the university, but a minimal representation of diverse population still prevails. A total of 1,700 students of color attend State University. In this community, Carmen is a school counselor practicum student, a career placement instructor, and a counselor for a High School Equivalency program.

Daily Experiences

It's 7:50 a.m. and the sun is shining, the kids in her apartment complex are playing outside waiting for the bus, and Carmen is driving off to work. She is nicely dressed in some dancing bell bottoms and a semi-elegant sweater. Her hair is nicely brushed and her make-up defines her Latina features.

By 8: 03 a.m. Carmen has arrived to work and is sitting in a meeting to evaluate the progress of her students with the office staff. She provides a conservative report of the students' achievements and does not elaborate on any of her counseling experiences. There is a silent advocacy Carmen holds in providing protection of the students she counsels and teachers.

After the meeting is over, it is 9:00 am and Carmen is preparing to teach her Career Assessment class to migrant farm workers aspiring to attain their GED. Carmen sits in her office and awaits for her colleague to join in class preparation. Her colleague, Sonia-who is Latina,

enters the office shortly after. The two begin to debrief on the staff meeting and dissect the meeting into seconds by highlighting every person's body language, response and active role.

The Chicana/Latinas express their concerns about the director's perceptions about their work, they ask one another how their presentation of the week's circumstances came across, and they provide an evaluation of their performances for each other. Carmen expresses her concern about her boss's perception about her work and states "I am doing my best, but who knows what he thinks. I am tired of putting all my time in and being questioned about my ability." She goes on to state the importance of feedback from her employer and presents frustration by shaking her head and changing the topic.

By 12:00 Carmen has fulfilled her duties at the High School Equivalency Program. She collects her belongings, locks her office door and awaits for Sonia to go to lunch. The two walk out and walk towards the university's student center. There, they eat for one hour and discuss the deadlines they have for papers or assignments. Carmen offers Sonia her paperwork from previous years, because she is more advanced in her coursework; Sonia offers to proofread her papers in return.

1:00 p.m. strikes and the clock tower chimes its bells. The Chicana/Latinas bus their table and rush to class. Carmen attends her Multicultural Counseling course accompanied by seven other students. The course is not one required for the Masters and is one of two culturally oriented course of the entire program. Carmen is the one of the three ethnic students in the class, however she is the only Chicana/Latina representative. The class dialogues about various cultures, values and practices. Carmen is asked: "Why are you Hispanics like that?" "Can't you just adjust to the system?"

The class dialogue continued to discriminate between Hispanics, Chicanos, and Latinos. Carmen elaborated on the notion that she identified as Latina "to respect her culture." She stated Chicanism is "a movement of the Mexican population, one that is exclusive of other Latino ethnicities." Carmen went further to say that she relates to the paradigm of "El movimento", the movement, and provides support but still identifies as Latina.

It is 3:30 p.m. and the class is over until the following week. Carmen remains seated in her seat writing some titles of a Bibliography circulated in class. As she is writing, she overhears her classmates discussing the selection process for the program. A Euro-American woman is dialoguing with a Euro-American man about how it would be beneficial to be of an ethnic minority these days. The classmate states, "It's funny how admission waives all scores for them." The two classmates continue to walk the hallway and Carmen remained pensive in her seat, re-encountering the many stereotypes she faces on a daily basis.

Carmen usually goes to the High School following her Multicultural class. She drives up the rural, hilly streets and assists students as a school counselor throughout the rest of the afternoon. Carmen is one of three practicum students and again, the sole representation of any ethnic population in the office. Her supervisor assigns Carmen cases to treat and offers supervision. Carmen is selective in her actions and is not spontaneous or abrupt in her behavior. She states," Some practicum students take the lead and do not check with the supervision prior to acting on their instincts. I, on the other hand, find myself checking with my supervisor for verification and permission."

It is 6:30 p.m. and Carmen is parking her car in front of her apartment. She waves at her neighbor and enters her home. The home has a sweet smell of violets and has ethnic ornaments placed on the wall. The living room has an entertainment center, CDs -Spanish and English, and family pictures. Flowers decorate the bookshelf which is full of Latina literature as Sandra Cisneros, Christina Garcia and Ana Castillo.

The phone rings and Carmen receives a call from her family in California. Her mother asks how her day has been and what has occurred. Carmen expresses the good aspects of the day and investigates the daily events of her family. "¿Que has hecho, Mama, como ha estado el dia?" The mother responds the day has gone well and that she is tired from work. Completing a 10-15 minute dialogue with her mother, Carmen' s father speaks and announces how much he misses his daughter. Carmen shares her desire to see them and states, "I am counting my days to go home. The only thing that keeps me here is that all this- is temporary." The mother redirects the

conversation to a positive light and states how proud she is of her daughter. Carmen becomes tearful eyed when concluding the conversation and states, "Pongan una velita para que me valla bien." The mother assures her daughter the saints will protect her and that she is always in her prayers.

7:30 p.m. marks dinner time. The Chicana/Latina has a Spanish cookbook where she follows receipts to make dishes that remind her of her home. She cooks: arroz con pollo (chicken with rice), bistec empanizado (breaded steak), arroz blanco (White rice) y papa fritas (french fries). Her roommate arrives, another Latina, and states she will cook dinner the following night. The two sit at the dinner table and debrief about the day.

Alma, her roommate, is like Carmen's surrogate sister. The two attended high school together and went on to college providing support for one another. Alma is a dominant Chicana/Latina who is also pursing a Master's degree. Alma identifies as Chicana and plays as a role model for Carmen. Alma, being very outspoken, models a confident demeanor for her Chicana sister and encourages Carmen to pursue her dreams. Carmen describes Alma as being "my motivator, a part of my support system, someone who understands me".

Throughout the rest of the night, Carmen reviews her schedule for the following day, reads for classes and prepares for class discussion. She concentrates on the readings, highlights important points and writes questions and comments on the margins. Once she has reviewed for class, Carmen revisits her roommate's bedroom and they dialogue about: school concerns, home issues, and Carmen's relationship with her boyfriend.

It's 11:50 p.m. and the phone rings. Her boyfriend from California, Alberto, is calling. He reports having a long day composed of attending classes at a four year institution, going to work and working out at the gym. Carmen begins to dialogue with Alberto about her hard shifts at University State. She becomes quiet and states, "I wonder if all this is worth it ". She declares her concerns about her family and friends living a life of their own and her distance preventing her from being a part of it.

Carmen goes on to elaborate about her fear of being alone in University State. She tells Alberto, "Honey, I am so far away. I am so scared; What if I run into problems? Who do I run to; my family is not close so they could come quickly to help me". She confesses she misses home. "I yearn to talk things out with my family, I miss solving my problems collaboratively and I despise feeling alone."

Carmen and her boyfriend speak in Spanish and English. On occasion, their language becomes Spanglish. Their conversations are composed of : ?Que pasa, are you mad? Dime, come on, tell me. The two share the Latino culture and understand the Spanish tongue. Carmen expresses that having a Latino boyfriend is "extremely important." She states, "I want my children to speak Spanish and to also hold the Latin heritage behind it. It's not just learning the language but practicing my values and beliefs as well." The conversations last from half hour to 60 minutes. They finish with an understanding that they will resume the following day.

The Future

Carmen's desire is to return back home and provide services to students from the inner city. She desires to be advocate for disadvantaged children and provide guidance and advise. She wishes for the kids to recognize that higher education is not an unattainable goal and states "someday kids can look up to me and say- she did it, I can do it too." She plans to move back home and live with her parents. She elaborates,

> "I can not wait to return back home. I have paid my dues, and it is time to go back to where I came from. I await to see my community and leave these tall buildings, the structured lecture halls and the closed doors with the scholarly names followed by a trail of abbreviations. It was like a big field trip when I first got on campus but now that I have finished, my call is to return to el Barrio of East Los Angeles."

In addition, Carmen looks forward to having a family in the near future after she marries. She expresses her eagerness to begin her role of motherhood. She states, "I will drop everything to have my children. My efforts to my community are important, and they will not go forgotten, but my motherhood mandate is my primary call."

Analysis

Background

Higher education is not a highly supportive environment for students of color. Carmen is experiencing the many obstacles encountered by minority students in the system. She has had difficulty adjusting and has been surrounded mainly by a culturally insensitive environment. Carmen's experience in higher education is one of curiosity and exploration. She is a Chicana/Latina from the inner city with a different view to the world. Her ideology does not match the university, and she has tried to create strategies to attain orientation and familiarization with the dynamics of higher education.

Carmen's history demonstrates her ties to her culture and its practices. Her primary language is Spanish and her identity is Bicultural with a Latino emphasis. These factors are not ones celebrated nor considered as essential components for a student of color's experience. Furthermore, the Spanish language was not one which assisted Carmen in her education. It functions as a constraint for effective communication and elaborate English skills.

The struggles of being in higher education

Carmen is surrounded by a predominately White environment in the university setting. Her culture is not one celebrated nor for that matter even recognized. She was taught from a very traditional teaching paradigm, and her Latino culture was not one highly emphasized. There is a societal expectation to adapt and inherit the dominant culture.

Coming from a predominate Latino community, Carmen experiences culture shock . She had difficulty communicating with her peers and her professors. Being of a reserved character and one who expresses very little, she feels evaluated as non-competent and falling short from 'graduate material.' Furthermore, the underrepresentation of ethnic populations does not provide her with a peer support system.

Limited Role Models

The Chicana/Latina struggled to celebrate her culture. In an institution with a limited cultural quality and small numbers of ethnic people with whom to identify, she felt isolated. She does not have many individuals to speak to her in her native tongue, she felt minimal social support and no cultural integration within her daily encounters.

Throughout her experience, conflict values exist between the institution and the Chicana/Latina. It is apparent the Chicana/Latina paradigm works from a very holistic perspective. This, she gains from working together with others and creating a family setting. It is clear her ideology is not one person is an island unto themselves. Carmen does not align within individualism and feels uncomfortable with competition. She works for the benefit of all, a value not highly emphasized in the ivory tower of higher education.

This conflict in value and perspectives leads Carmen to discomfort and disassociation from the system. She views higher education as a temporary transition and a game which does not belong to her. The lack of ethnic representation, role models, Chicano/Latino research and literature reinforces this notion. Higher education is an enhancer to provide career mobility, but not a knowledge provider that established comfort zones for expression and exploration. Carmen's attainment of her degrees are for the betterment of her community and not the purpose of improving her checkbook or salary.

The Persistence of Stereotypes

Stereotypes and discrimination serve as discouragers. Carmen constantly finds herself proving her abilities and disproving the myths of her community. Her work and credibility is questioned and her daily tasks are not only to produce but to emphasize the credibility of her product. Furthermore, discrimination is a discourger and a loud noise which distracted Carmen. Some professors perceive Carmen as unable to produce quality work and hold her to different standards.

Situational constraints require Carmen to act differently in social situations. She is aware of the lack of congruence, but she does not abandon her innate paradigm. She continues to practice her culture and values and is punished with limited expectations or misconceptions.

Carmen's behaviors attempt to implement the gap emphasized by higher education. Her relationship and connection with: her family, boyfriend and friends demonstrate her need for affiliation and identification. These individuals provide Carmen with the support she needs to survive and succeed in the world of academia.

Multiple Roles

Carmen plays various roles throughout her experience as a graduate student. The Chicana/Latina plays- the daughter, the sister, the girlfriend, the graduate student, the professional counselor and the advocate for her community. Daily, she examines the meaning associated to each role and struggles with the incoherence of the professional, the graduate student and the Latina who is the good daughter, sister and girlfriend.

The professional and graduate student is one who is typically highly focused and who dedicates her time and effort to her career. There is high involvement with the responsibilities and minimal time for outside activities. The professional is to be conservative, works non-stop and devotes his/her time to the assigned tasks. The graduate student is often a solo player competing to master the material with minimal social support.

The Chicana/Latina daughter, sister and girlfriend serve as a liaison between the community and resources. These roles are to nurture the environment and provide care and support. Their presence is of high significance and their interaction is one expected. The graduate student or professional mostly requires distance and dedication; there is minimal time for family interaction.

Overall, one part of the paradigm clashes with the other. Carmen struggles daily to keep a balance between the two and has come to recognize her practices as a Latina are not 'the norm' in University state or any four year institution. She has found the university environment not to

reinforce her paradigm and, furthermore, encounters minimal positive external stimuli to reinforce her self identity. As a result, her commitment has caused her immense sacrifice and costs.

Summary of Analysis

Traditional teaching and a monocultural perspective reflect some foundation of the environment and barriers encountered by Carmen in the higher education system. The barriers function as constraining elements that do not accommodate to a Chicana/Latina experience. The structured halls, the stereotypes, misconceptions and poor social cultural quality carry more weight than accredited by a four tier institutions.

The elements result in dissatisfaction and discomfort. Carmen recognizes the lack of congruence between her paradigm and the one encouraged by higher education. She evaluates her goals, scarifies some cultural practices and modifies her life. The Chicana/Latina encounters difficulty playing various roles, and she recognizes that this Euro-centric society may not support all her practices and her general nature. Carmen will continue to encounter limitations while reaching her life accomplishments, but improvising and innovating strategies will assist the Chicana/Latina to attain her desired goals.

Recommendations/Conclusion

To facilitate retention or recruitment efforts, we must understand the experiences and adjustments to the academic system for minorities. Research collaborations should be descriptive and should consider culture as a variable for the analysis. Researchers should look forward to clearly describing the aspects of the minority experience in higher education, and be sensitive to cultural diversity. Researchers must understand the barriers encountered by ethnic students, and there should be efforts to identify strategies that increase the flow of these students in graduate studies. Minorities leak out of the system and do not receive an equitable distribution of opportunities to attain graduate degrees.

The impending cultural revolution calls for a pluralistic perspective to enlarge the support system for ethnic students in higher education. Institutions have not yet developed nor do they provide appropriate services and resources to minorities. Many institutions claim to be moving towards Multiculturalism. They are aiming towards a higher education with a Multicultural orientation and are recognizing the importance of minority involvement in the channel of opportunities of America: namely higher education.

Chicano/Latinos continue to be an underrepresented group in higher education. There is a disequilibrium between the number of ethnic students and non-ethnic students in post secondary institutions. This promotes a tremendous call to recruit and retain Chicano/Latino students in higher education. The study addresses this problem within the Chicano/Latino community not being addressed by greater society. It can help society understand the Chicana/Latinas' experience in higher education and provide insight on their views. In addition, it can help post-secondary institutions direct their mission and efforts to correlate with the expectations and necessities of this society.

> "The argument presented is that the overt goals of multicultural education can be realized only when policy-makers, educators and communities acknowledge the subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) forms of institutionalized racism that permeate the structure of schools and mediate the interactions between educators and students" (Cummings, 1988)

Homogeneity has limited the scope and practice of Higher education. It remains clear, however, that a useful system with culturally relevant trainers is needed. Education must take the responsibility to develop sensitively- skilled, cultural teachers, counselors and administrators. A Multicultural Perspective provides the strength and ability to conceptualize and account for the effects of culture. It will provide a culturally sensitive paradigm and as a result, attain great **beneficence** to the elite "Walls and Windows of the Ivory Tower".

Definition of Terms

Latinos: A group composed of Spanish speaking people with Spanish heritage from North and South America and the Caribbean. They are a collective and emergent type of group formed out of inter-ethnic relations of at least two Spanish speaking groups during some situation or historical event (Padilla, 1985).

Hispanics: Refers to any one of the 20 nationalities that are Spanish speaking. (Valdez, Baron, Ponce, 1987).

Chicanos: They are citizens of the U.S. with Cultural ties to Mexico and Spain. They have Indian heritage and Anglo influences (La Causa, 1972). They are extremely diversified individuals and have ethnic nationalism along with activism. (Aguirre, 1972).

Chicana/ Feminist Ideology: It is similar to Anglo feminist ideology in that the goals of the two movements include egalitarian relations between the sexes (Vasquez, and Gonzalez, 1981).

Ethnicity: Identification by people who are members in a distinct sociocultural group based on a specific nationality and/or biological characteristic (Melville, 1988).

Ethnic Group: Large group of people classed to common racial, national, tribal, linguistic or cultural origin or background (Webster's Dictionary, 1989).

Ethnic Identity: Individual's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of his/her personality that is attributable to ethnic group membership. (Lee & Richardson, 1991)

Race: Group of people connected by common descent or origin (Thorndike & Bernhart, 1968).

Culture: Associated with racial or ethnic groups as well as the with gender, religion, economic status, nationality and physical capacity (Ivey, 1990). It can also be conceptualized as the values, beliefs and practices that are frequently shared by groups identified by these variables (Lopez, 1989).

Multicultural: It more accurately reflects the complexity of culture and avoids any implied comparison. It takes into consideration the specific values, beliefs, and actions conditioned by a client's ethnicity gender, religion, socioeconomic status, political views, lifestyle, geographic region, and historical experiences with the dominant culture (Wright, Coley & Corey, 1989).

Minority Group: A group of people who have typically been discriminated against or subjected to unequal treatment and oppression by society, largely because of their group membership (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1989). It does not have a quantitative connotation.

Minority: A person who is subordinate on some way to the majority. The person can be distinguished from the majority on the basis of physical or cultural characteristics. He/she is excluded from full participation in the life of society (Biesanz & Biesanz, 1969).

Acculturation: The adaptation for an ethnic group to the mainstream society (Padilla, 1995).

Assimilation: The process by which individuals or groups voluntarily or involuntarily are incorporated into society (Witzen & Baca-Zinn, 1992).

Ethnocentrism: Denotes a belief that one's own group is the center of everything, the standard by which all others are rated (Axelson, 1985).

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